The York River was closed by batteries at York and Gloucester, where the stream is less than a mile wide. Moreover, the strength of the *Merrimac*, the amount of harm she could do, if properly handled and measurably favored by fortune, was absolutely undeterminable, but it was certain that she was the most formidable war-vessel afloat. If there was one place on the coast more perilous than another, to fix upon as a rendezvous for some three hundred transports carrying a great army, that place was Fortress Monroe. But McClellan had been forbidden to adopt the Urbana plan; and, sooner than yield to the wishes of the Government and take the overland route, he ordered his army, the only army on the Atlantic seaboard, to be carried by water to Hampton Roads, where the terrible and invulnerable Confederate ironclad had so recently destroyed two of the finest vessels in the Federal navy. There can be no question in regard to the danger which McClellan in this matter deliberately incurred. He asked the Assistant Secretary of the Navy, Fox, a naval officer himself, if he could " rely on the *Monitor* to keep the *Merrimac* in check, so that" he could "make Fort Monroe a base of operations/'[2] and Fox told him[3] that while "the *Monitor*" was "more than a

match for the *Merrimac,* she might be disabled in the next encounter/[7] and he could not "advise so great dependence upon her." It is true Fox went on to say[4] that he thought the *M&rrimac* did not intend to pass by Fort Monroe, and that he was of

'5 W. R., 46.
* 9 W. R., 27.
[2]9 W, R.. 27.
[4] McClellan's O, S., 249,